Having published on December 18, 2002, a final rule for dishwashers to improve the reliability of testing, change the definition of compact and standard models, and reduce the number of use cycles per year to 264, the Department of Energy is now working to develop a new test procedure for soil-sensing dishwashers. We received on December 12, 2001, a report from Arthur D. Little evaluating available survey data on consumer dishwasher use. Based on that report, we are considering the following elements as part of a new test procedure proposal. It is anticipated that a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, based on a soiled test method, will be published this spring.

1.   For conventional dishwashers, to maintain the current clean load test method.

2.   For soil-sensing dishwashers, to develop a soil-based test to approximate the varied soil loads that consumers run. Requiring that,
   • the energy consumption be measured for three soil tests of decreasing soil level to represent "heavy", "medium", and "light" soil loads, where the level of soil is determined from data on consumer dishwasher use and the method of soiling is based on the AHAM test method.   (e.g., simulating a "light" soil load with one AHAM soiled place setting plus seven clean place-settings and 6 clean serving pieces)

   • the overall energy consumption value for the dishwasher be obtained by means of a weighted average of the three test values, based on the percentage of time consumers run "heavy", "medium", and "light" soil loads.

   • the Estimated Annual Operating Cost be obtained in the same method as conventional dishwashers

   • both current and future soil-sensing models be tested using the soil-based test procedure.

3.   For all dishwashers, to revise the estimated annual dishwasher use based on more recent survey results.

4.   For all dishwashers, to require the measurement of the stand-by power and incorporate this form of energy consumption into the annual energy use, rather than measuring and reporting stand-by power as a separate value.